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# The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction, Cross-cultural Adjustment, and the Adjustment of the Trailing Spouse on Female Expatriate Success: A Preliminary Review and Survey Proposal

Leanna Joyce Morrow

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The University of Southern Mississippi

The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction, Cross-cultural Adjustment, and the  
Adjustment of the Trailing Spouse on Female Expatriate Success:  
A Preliminary Review and Survey Proposal

by

Leanna Morrow

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Honors College of  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
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Bachelor of Science in Business Administration  
in the Department of Management and International Business

May 2018



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## Abstract

As the world continually moves towards globalization and a diverse work environment, the need for employed female expatriates has never been greater. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the factors affecting the successful adjustment of these women. This was done by analyzing data provided by the InterNations database in relation to three things: cross-cultural adjustment, job satisfaction, and the experience of the trailing spouse.

Based on this study, it was determined that there is a need to research the effects of marital and familial status on turnover intentions during female expatriate assignments. A survey assessing the satisfaction and turnover intention rates between married women, married women with children, single women, and single women with children on expatriate assignments was proposed.

Keywords: expatriates, cross-cultural adjustment, job satisfaction, trailing spouse

## Dedication

Mom and Dad:

For your endless love and support.

Thank you for always encouraging me to face my fears.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents and grandparents for pushing, encouraging, and believing in me, even when I didn't believe in myself. I would also like to thank my friends who have stayed with me in the library all night and heard the word "thesis" more times than they can count.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

An expatriate is a person who is a citizen of one country but who is living and working in another country. With regards to this research, an expatriate is someone who is either employed by a company in their home country and given a temporary international assignment, someone who found a job on their own, or someone who followed their spouse abroad. Previous studies fail to take into consideration whether or not there is a difference in adjustments if the expatriate is male or female. For example, does it make a difference in family adjustment if the expatriate is the mother or father of the family? There is research regarding how the genders compare in the expatriate workplace, but there is little research regarding how this could affect the family. The combination of these two research interests provides a new area for expatriate research.

During the mid to late 1900s, research into the expatriate experience focused solely on the expatriate. For instance, Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) examined how personality traits affect expatriate success. Caligiuri (1997) defined success on a global assignment according to three criteria: “desire to terminate the expatriate assignment, cross-cultural adjustment, and performance on the job”. However, it would seem that the success of an expatriate assignment is not dependent solely on the expatriate.

Recently, research into the expatriate experience has shifted its focus to the impact family members have on the success of the expatriate. In McNulty’s survey (2005) the happiness and contentment of the spouse was ranked as one of the most important factors for both male and female expatriates. Cartus (2007) and GMAC (2008) conducted separate surveys which showed that approximately two-thirds of expatriates

bring along a spouse, children, or both, and the cross-cultural adjustment of the spouse has a direct impact on the success of female expatriates. Though two-thirds of expatriates bring their spouse, that leaves one-third of expatriates who go alone.

There is little research regarding the experience of the female expatriate. Because of the limited data pertaining to only female expatriates, this study examined data applying to both men and women regarding job satisfaction, cross-cultural adjustment, and the experience of the trailing spouse.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

During the past two decades, the world's economy has become more globalized. There are very few economies in the world that are not reliant on the goods and services of another. Due to the steady rise in globalization, the need for multinational corporations to employ expatriates has never been greater (Varma et al., 2008). For example, a U.S. based multinational corporation that primarily uses U.S. nationals to staff higher level management positions abroad, will also employ host country nationals in lower level positions. Expatriates play a vital role in a multinational corporation's effort to expand globally. According to Tung and Varma (2008), "contrary to predictions of the mid-1980s, the demand for people to work across international boundaries will increase in the decades ahead".

### ***Acquiring Expatriate Assignments***

Most major studies concerning expatriates in the last five years have noted a common trend: the increasing number of female expatriates. Even so, the number of women chosen for expatriate assignments is still proportionally low. Women make up 40 percent of the global workforce yet they are still extremely under-represented at senior management levels as well as in expatriate positions (World Bank, 2011). For example, in Tung's (1997) study of 400 expatriates, only 13.9% were female. Two reasons women are less likely to be offered an expatriate assignment are due to beliefs perpetuated by organizations. One reason is due to the gender-biased belief by decision makers that women are not interested in international assignments (Adler, 1984). Adler (1984) tested this by performing a large-scale study of MBA students and found no difference of

interest in expatriate assignments between men and women. Another misguided myth is that women are less likely to be accepted by host country men. The study by Caligiuri and Tung (1999) did not support this assumption by providing statistical evidence that women are as successful as men on expatriate assignments. Adler (1987) also tested this myth by interviewing women regarding their acceptance by host country nationals. Only 20 percent of the respondents perceived “negative attitudes from host country nationals”. The study also found that 42 percent of respondents attributed being a female to part of their success. Even in countries where host country nationals are predominantly male, female expatriates perform relatively well compared to their male counterparts (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999). The under-representation of women assigned to expatriate assignments contributes to the persistence of the glass ceiling. In fact, according to the 2016 Global Mobility Trends Survey, 59% of those surveyed believe that females face greater obstacles than men when acquiring international assignments. The continual progression of the world towards a globalized economy and the increasing need for multinational corporations has made an international experience a prerequisite for many top managerial positions (Black and Gregersen, 1992).

### ***Success of Expatriate Assignments***

Several prominent studies have shown that women are successful on expatriate assignments (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999; Adler, 1987). Caligiuri (1997) has defined success on a global assignment by identifying the following three criteria: “desire to terminate the expatriate assignment, cross-cultural adjustment, and performance on the job”. Caligiuri and Tung (1999) conducted a study on each of these criteria. According to

the results, men and women did not differ in their willingness to terminate their assignments, nor did they differ in their supervisor-rated job performance. Women were, however, less cross-culturally adjusted than men in countries with a low percentage of women in the workforce.

Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) theorized that there are three personality traits in a well-adjusted expatriate: self-orientation, others-orientation, and perceptual orientation. Self-orientation is characterized by the ability to cope with stress and technical competence within their field. Self-orientation is essential for the success of female expatriates because they must show exceptional competence in order to be accepted by their male counterparts (Adler, 1987). Additionally, females must possess the stress management skills to be able to handle working in a male-dominated environment. Others-orientation refers to the expatriate's ability to form relationships and communicate well with the host country nationals. Women tend to rely on cooperation and non-verbal communication to achieve goals (Tung, 1997). The tendency to avoid conflict allows women to facilitate interpersonal relationships between superiors, colleagues, and clients that may be integral to the success of the expatriate assignment (Tung, 1997). When working abroad, women who have strong others-orientation are able to form strong relationships which result in better cross-cultural adjustment (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985). Finally, perceptual orientation is the ability to understand and analyze the actions of others. Perceptual orientation is especially important for female expatriates because they must be able to adapt to both cultural and gender differences within their host country. When women are serving in more traditional host countries, there may be

situations where gender has a direct impact on their performance in the job (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

### ***Marital Status***

An international assignment can have a long-lasting impact on a person's career. Also, it can have a significant influence on personal relationships. Approximately two-thirds of expatriates bring along a spouse, children, or both, while cross-cultural adjustment of the spouse has a direct impact on the success of female expatriates (Cartus, 2007; Global Relocation Trends, 2008). In the 2004 Global Relocation Trends survey, spouses accompanied 86% of married expatriates. In one study, over ninety percent of employed female expatriates surveyed said that the happiness of their spouse was key to the success of their international assignment (Linehan, 2002). In 2011, Kang found that positive spousal adjustment had a significant positive effect on the overall adjustment of the expatriate. Since the majority of expatriate managers are married, the partner of the expatriate may experience high levels of stress due to a "loss of self-worth and identity, particularly if he/she was previously employed, lack of contact with friends and relatives, and social or cultural ostracism in the foreign country" (Harvey, 1985).

As women take on a greater role in the workforce, the number of dual-career couples is continually rising. As related to expatriate assignments, problems dual-career couples are facing include: a higher refusal rate to relocate, disruption of family income, and the "discontinuity of the trailing spouse's career" (Harvey and Buckley, 1998).

According to the 2004 Global Relocation Trends survey, 50% of spouses were employed before relocation, but only 16% were employed during their spouse's international

assignment. One recent study showed that 61% of expatriates' spouses were employed before relocation, but only 21% were able to obtain employment in their host country (ORG Worldwide 2005). Loss of spousal income and disruption of spouse's career are cited as the two most common reasons for turning down an international assignment (ORG Worldwide, 2005).

As the number of women given international assignments grows, so does the number of women going alone. In today's society, professional women are staying single longer. In the United States, women are marrying later or not at all. Between 1970 and 1998, the median age at first marriage for women rose from 20.8 years to 25.0 years and the percentage of women aged 30 to 34 who had never married rose from 6.2% to 21.6% (U.S. Census, 2000). In addition, due to the difficulties of bringing along a family and the number of dual income families, it may be that some women will choose to complete their assignment abroad alone and leave their family at home.

Additionally, in McNulty's survey (2005) the happiness and contentment of the spouse was ranked as one of the most important factors for both male and female expatriates. The limited research that exists on male spouses suggests that males have a more difficult time adjusting to both a new environment and their role as the secondary breadwinner (Linehan, 2002). However, moving abroad alone for a job assignment presents its own set of complications. For instance, single women can face more difficulties adjusting in traditionally male dominated countries, where being single is perceived as a pitiable situation rather than a choice or non-issue (Polson 2016).



### ***Importance of Family Support in International Assignments***

Caligiuri et al. (1998) completed a study that showed that family support was directly related to the expatriate's adjustment to the assignment. While this research suggests that family support is important for the success of an expatriate, family support may be essential for the success of a female expatriate due to the non-traditional role of male trailing partners and the more involved role women tend to have in raising children (Caligiuri and Casco, 1998). Due to the difficulties of obtaining a job abroad if not sent there by a parent company, many spouses choose to stay at home. In a situation where the expatriate is a woman, male spouses may, for the first time, be required to stay home and be the "homemaker" (Punnett et al., 1992). Male spouses may also have to combat traditional norms in the host country that dictate that the man be the breadwinner of the household (Caligiuri et al., 1999).

Of the studies and surveys that were answered by women, the majority of those women were spouses of a male expatriate (Harvey, 1985; Caligiuri, 1997; Caligiuri, et al., 1998). There is a need for information regarding female expatriates who are the primary bread-winners and how their job satisfaction is influenced by how well their families adjust to living abroad. The following are questions that need to be addressed. Is the female single or married? Does she have children? Is she a co-parent or single mother? Did she bring her spouse and/or children abroad? These are the types of questions that need to be answered in order to gain a complete understanding of the female expatriate's experience abroad.

### *Effects of Social Support and Cross-cultural Adjustment on Female Expatriates*

Cross-cultural adjustment is defined as “the degree of psychological comfort and familiarity that the individual has for the new environment” (Black, 1990). Regardless of gender, there is a general consensus that social support and interaction are critical components of cross-cultural adjustment. However, research suggests that compared to men, women face additional work and non-work challenges. Non-work challenges include family issues, dual-career households, and child-care issues (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999; Elron and Kark, 2000). Certain cultural constraints can severely impact the ability of females to interact with their male counterparts at work. In some instances, cultural norms may not allow host nationals to freely interact with women in or outside of work (Caligiuri, 1999). This can severely limit access to both social support and social interaction.

Subtle biases against female professionals can also serve as a deterrent from male/female work relationships (Elron and Kark, 2000). In some cultures, women, both host nationals and expatriates, are considered to belong to a lower social status. This automatic generalization will inevitably undermine a woman’s authority both inside and outside of the organization. Western female expatriates may have the advantage of being perceived as professionals first, and then women. These women may be seen as exceptionally competent (i.e. if the corporation chose to send a woman, she must be capable: Adler, 1999). However, even if host national men respect and view a female expatriate as a competent leader, it is unlikely that this will affect how men interact with

women in a social situation. This is in accordance with the finding that women can perform on par with their male counter-parts and yet still not adjust as well in countries with fewer women in the workforce (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999).

### ***Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is defined as “a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976). It is also based on how content an employee is with his/her job, the degree of fit between an employee and his/her organization, and work/life balance (Mumford, 1972; Linehan and Walsh, 1999). Extrinsic and intrinsic factors also play a key role in job satisfaction. Weiss et al., (1967) determined that some intrinsic factors affecting job satisfaction are the work environment, interaction with other workers, feelings of accomplishment, and identity with the job/task. Weiss et al., (1967) also found that extrinsic satisfaction is derived from the rewards bestowed on an individual by peers, superiors, or an organization. These rewards can be awarded in form of compensation, recognition, advancement, and so forth.

### ***Expatriate Turnover***

"Expatriate turnover or ‘expatriate failure’ typically includes all individuals who quit or transfer back to the U.S. prior to the completion of their expected foreign assignments” (Naumann, 1992). There are two types of turnover: internal and external. External turnover occurs when an employee leaves a company and seeks employment elsewhere. Internal turnover occurs when an employee leaves a position but remains with the firm (Naumann, 1992).

While Harvey (1985) determined that family contentment is central to the success of expatriate assignments, it may also be the most important contributor to expatriate turnover. In fact, Tung's (1982) research found that two of the three most frequently cited causes for expatriate failure/turnover were family related. Specifically, "the inability of the expatriate's family/spouse to adjust to a different physical or cultural environment" and "other family related problems".

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

As the world continues to progress towards a more globalized economy, organizations are moving towards diversity in top management positions. Women now have access to jobs that were at one time a closed door. However, international experience is quickly becoming a prerequisite for top managerial positions. While there is extensive research into the experience of male expatriates (Adler 1993), the field of research regarding employed female expatriates is still relatively new.

This study will build upon previous research and will incorporate data from the InterNations database to develop a better understanding of the factors affecting the success of female expatriates. Because of a lack of research into the employed female expatriate, this study seeks to justify the design of a questionnaire which addresses issues such as: how does bringing a family abroad on an expatriate assignment affect the likelihood of success for employed female expatriates? Are there areas in which organizations are failing to provide adequate support for female expatriates?

The implementation of such a study will add research into the employed female expatriate experience and provide recommendations for management and individual organizations to better prepare and assist their female expatriates.

## **Research Design**

Research was conducted in two ways for this study. The first was an in-depth literature review which analyzed the current research regarding female expatriates. The second step was secondary research which analyzed and compared publicly available data from InterNations *Expatriate Insider* (2014/2015/2016/2017).

The goal of this study was to research current literature and identify areas of the expatriate experience which determine the success of employed female expatriates and analyze data concerning these areas from InterNations. The areas of interest identified were cross-cultural adjustment, job satisfaction, and the experience of the trailing spouse. InterNations provided demographical data on gender and relationship status. InterNations also provided data on levels of satisfaction with working abroad and ease of settling in. The data provided by InterNations does not differentiate between male and female expatriates or employed and non-employed expatriates.

After analyzing the current data, a survey will be provided which could add further insight into unaddressed areas of research. These are some of questions that will be answered by conducting this proposed survey. How does bringing a family abroad on an expatriate assignment affect the likelihood of success for employed women expatriates? In comparison to employed women with families, are employed single women expatriates more or less likely to succeed on expatriate assignments? Do employed women with families have more trouble adjusting to expatriate assignments due to the non-traditional role of male trailing partners?

## Procedures

This study utilized data provided by InterNations through their *Expatriate Insider* Reports. Data from 2014 through 2017 from InterNations, the largest international community for people who live and work abroad, were used in this study. Demographical data were incorporated which included age, nationality, and relationship status.

Each year InterNations posted an online survey which was available for one month to its subscribers. According to the *Expatriate Insider* survey report (2016), the survey was promoted through the InterNations website, as well as in its newsletter and social media profiles. The survey was answered by both members of InterNations and expatriates in general (*Expatriate Insider*, 2016). The data not only reflect the experience of “typical” expatriates, but gives insight into the experience of people who moved abroad for a variety of reasons. This includes executive assignees, trailing spouses, teachers, students, employees, managers, retirees, entrepreneurs, self-employed professionals, those looking for work, and freelancers (*Expatriate Insider*, 2015). Between 12,000 and 14,000 expatriates representing over 160 countries participated each year in the online survey and a sample size of at least 50 respondents was required for each index (*Expatriate Insider*, 2017).

According to *Expatriate Insider* 2014, for questions regarding personal feelings, the InterNations survey asked respondents to rate 43 different aspects of their life on a scale of one to seven: four is neutral and seven is the highest rating. The rating process quantified the participant’s personal satisfaction with each aspect of life abroad. The individual ratings were then bundled to create several subcategories which slightly vary

each year. The mean values of these subcategories were used to rate Quality of Life, Ease of Settling In, Working Abroad, Family Life, Gender and Relationships, and Personal Finance. The rankings for the five groups and the respondents answer to the question “How satisfied are you with life in general?” were then averaged for the Overall Country Ranking (Expatriate Insider, 2016). For the years 2015-2017, ten types of expatriates are identified by their main motivation for relocating. The typologies designated by InterNations were created by “grouping data sets according to the similarity of their responses” for their motivation for moving abroad (Expatriate Insider, 2015). About 10% of the respondent’s reasons for leaving did not fit into these categories, so they are not featured in any type. The data regarding “in a relationship” include both married and unmarried couples who are in a committed relationship (Expatriate Insider, 2016). Therefore, “in a relationship” will be used as a proxy for marital status since InterNations does not differentiate between married and unmarried couples, but it does define “in a relationship” as a serious relationship.

Due to the limitations of the data, the nationalities American, British, German, French, Spaniards, and Italian were chosen because data were provided for each nationality across all four years. The most common destinations for these nationalities are Germany, the United States of America, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. There is no data concerning types of expatriates for 2014.



## Measures

This study analyzed data provided by InterNations in relation to three things: job satisfaction, the experience of the trailing spouse, and cross-cultural adjustment. The unit for analysis is the individual respondent, as each participant provided their own responses to the questionnaire.

Job satisfaction is determined by work/life balance, contentment with his/her job, and extrinsic and intrinsic factors. According to InterNations, the Working Abroad Index measures satisfaction with job and career, work-life balance, and job security. Therefore, this index will be used to measure job satisfaction. Data from the Ease of Settling In Index were used to address cross-cultural adjustment. Cross-cultural adjustment measures how well people adjust to a new culture (Black, 1990). The Ease of Settling In Index measures how welcome expatriates feel in their host country, friendliness of the locals, ease of finding friends, and ease and importance of speaking the language (*Expatriate Insider*, 2016). These measures all play a role in how well an expatriate adjusts to his/her host country. Therefore, the data from the Ease of Settling In Index served as a proxy for cross-cultural adjustment. The typologies the Traveling Spouse and the Romantic, as defined by InterNations, cited “I moved for my partner’s career or education” and “I moved for love”, respectively, as their reasons for moving abroad. Therefore, these two typologies were used to reflect concerns of the trailing spouse.

Although a majority of the participants in the surveys administered by InterNations were female, the online surveys were open to any adults who considered

themselves to be expatriates. The data provided by InterNations included both male and female respondents who were either employed and unemployed.

## Chapter 4: Results

Table 1: Average Age by Nationality Versus Global Average

Year	Americans Abroad	British Abroad	Germans Abroad	French Abroad	Spaniards Abroad	Italians Abroad	Average Age
2014	44.2	47.6	41.6	35.5	36.8	38.3	39.5
2015	46.7	40.9	41.1	37.3	36	38.9	40.9
2016	50.2	52.4	45.1	39.5	38.3	41.7	43
2017	49.1	51.2	44.8	40.6	37.9	42.6	43.5

The data from InterNations provided demographical data on the average age of expatriates abroad. This includes both male and female expatriates. As shown in the above data, the average age of expatriates is slowly on the rise. However, these data does not give specific information as to the ages of employed female expatriates.

Table 2: Percentage of Expatriate Females by Nationality Versus Global Average

Year	Americans Abroad	British Abroad	Germans Abroad	French Abroad	Spaniards Abroad	Italians Abroad	Average % female
2014	59%	49%	57%	58%	53%	48%	53%
2015	56%	53%	57%	57%	57%	49%	53%
2016	51%	47%	50%	50%	51%	44%	49%
2017	58%	53%	60%	61%	57%	49%	56%

As shown in Table 2, except for the Italians abroad, most of those who completed the survey are women. The proportion of women is relatively high compared to other

expatriate research samples (see Stroh et al. 2000; van der Heijden et al. 2009). However, these surveys were completed by both expatriate employees and by the spouses of expatriate employees. Thus, we do not know how many of these women were employed.

Table 3: Percentage of Expatriates in a Relationship Verses Global Average

Year	Americans Abroad	British Abroad	Germans Abroad	French Abroad	Spaniards Abroad	Italians Abroad	Average % in a relationship
2014	64%	69%	68%	58%	52%	58%	64%
2015	65%	69%	66%	56%	58%	54%	62%
2016	66%	67%	65%	66%	60%	55%	63%
2017	68%	71%	63%	60%	58%	57%	65%

Table 3 shows that globally, 62% to 65% of expatriates are in a relationship. The Spaniards fall slightly under the global average with 52% to 60% in a relationship. These data include both male and female expatriates. It was not possible to distinguish how many of the respondents were employed female expatriates. The high percentage of expatriates in a relationship could explain the number of expatriates who are accompanied by dependent children. In 2014, 25% of expatriates were living with children under the age of 18. In 2015 and 2016, this number dipped slightly to 21%. In 2017, 27% of expatriates claimed dependent children.

Table 4: Top Expatriate Destination Rankings by Year

Year	Germany	United Kingdom	United States of America	Switzerland
2014 (out of 61 countries)	12	21	5	4
2015 (out of 64 countries)	16	31	13	14
2016 (out of 67 countries)	17	33	26	31
2017 (out of 65 countries)	23	54	43	27

The four most common destinations for the nationalities chosen were Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Switzerland. However, as seen in Table 4, these countries rarely make an appearance in the top 25% of the rankings for the most popular destinations. In fact, each country is steadily declining in popularity among expatriates. Again, the InterNations surveys do not specify how many of the respondents were employed female expatriates.

Table 5: Percentage of Female Expatriates in Countries Chosen Verses Global Average

Year	Germany	United Kingdom	United States of America	Switzerland	Global Average
2014	57%	68%	62%	64%	53%
2015	59%	67%	59%	63%	53%
2016	57%	66%	59%	60%	49%
2017	58%	68%	67%	60%	56%

So why are expatriates choosing to work in countries that do not offer the best experience abroad? There were several common themes among these countries. For one, in each of these countries throughout all four years, the majority of expatriates that answered the survey were women. There was also a higher percentage of female expatriates in each of these countries than the global average, as shown in Table 5. However, these data did not detail how many of these women were employed.

Table 6: Global Average for Reasons for Moving Abroad

Year	I found a job here on my own	I moved for love	I was sent here by my employer	I moved for my partner's job or education
2014	16%	11%	13%	10%
2015	13%	10%	13%	9%
2016	15%	11%	13%	9%
2017	12%	12%	11%	10%

Another recurring theme among these countries was the “Top Reasons for Relocating”. When “I moved for love”, “I moved for my partner’s job or education”, “I

was sent by my employer” or “I found a job here on my own” appeared in the top three reasons for relocating, respondents in these countries cited these four reasons at or above the global average. In 2014, 21% of respondents in Switzerland found a job on their own and 12% moved for their partner’s job or education. Of these, 64% of the respondents were female and 36% were male. Of those surveyed in the United Kingdom, 16% found a job on their own and 11% moved for love. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents were female and 32% were male. In the United States of America, 12% of respondents reported that they moved for love. Sixty-two percent of the respondents were female and 38% were male. In Germany, 17% found a job on their own and 13% moved for love. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were female and 43% were male. The global average for “I moved for love” and “I moved for my partner’s job or education” were 11% and 10%, respectively. The global average for “I found a job here on my own” was 16%.

In 2015 in Germany, 17% found a job on their own, 13% moved for love, and 12% moved for their partner’s job or education. In Switzerland, 21% of those surveyed found a job on their own and 13% moved for their partner’s job or education. Twelve percent of the respondents in the United States of America moved for love. In the United Kingdom, 11% moved for their partner’s education and 19% found a job on their own. The global average for “I moved for love” and “I moved for my partner’s career” are shown in

Table 6.

For the years 2016 and 2017, percentages for the top three reasons for relocating to each country were not provided, but Table 7 presents a breakdown of the reasons for relocating to each country, and the most popular reasons for relocating globally.

Although the InterNations data provided a breakdown for the number of male and female respondents in each country, it failed to give the number of males who are employed and the number of females who are employed.



Table 7: Top Three Reasons for Relocating to Specific Country

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Germany	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for studies #3 Moved for love	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for love #3 Moved for partner's job or education	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for love #3 Moved for studies	#1 Moved for love #2 Found a job here #3 Moved for partner's job or education
United Kingdom	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for studies #3 Moved for love	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for partner's job or education #3 Looking for adventure/personal challenge	#1 Found a job here #2 Sent by employer #3 Looking for an adventure/personal challenge	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for love #3 Moved for studies
United States of America	#1 Moved for studies #2 Sent by employer #3 Moved for love	#1 Sent by employer #2 Moved for love #3 Moved for studies	#1 Sent by employer #2 Moved for partner's job or education #3 Moved for studies	#1 Sent by employer #2 Moved for partner's job or education #3 Moved for studies
Switzerland	#1 Found a job here #2 Recruited by a local company #3 Moved for partner's job or education	#1 Found a job here #2 Sent by employer #3 Moved for partner's job or education	#1 Found a job here #2 Sent by employer #3 Moved for partner's job or education	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for partner's job or education #3 Recruited by local company
Global Average	#1 Found a job here #2 Sent by employer #3 Moved for love	#1 Found a job here #2 Sent by employer #3 Moved for love	#1 Found a job here #2 Sent by employer #3 Moved for love	#1 Found a job here #2 Moved for love #3 Sent by employer

Those who cited “I was sent here by my employer” as their reason for moving are categorized as the Foreign Assignee. Women made up 40%, 32%, and 37% of this category from 2015-2017, respectively. The Career Expat is anyone who stated “I found a job here on my own” as their reason for moving abroad. Women are almost on par with men in this category with 47%, 40%, and 48% from 2015-2017.

“I moved for my partner’s job or education” is ranked in the top three reasons for relocating nine out of sixty times. For the years, 2015-2017, anyone who cited “I moved for my partner’s job or education” as their reason for relocating falls under the Traveling Spouse typology. The Traveling Spouse is disproportionately female, ranging from 78% to 87%. Those who cited “I moved for love” as their reason for moving abroad are categorized as the Romantic. The Romantic typology is also disproportionately female. Between 2015-2017, 36% to 42% of the Romantics are female. The InterNations data did not detail how many of these women were employed.

Table 8: Country Rankings According to the Working Abroad Index

Year	Germany	United Kingdom	United States of America	Switzerland
2014 (out of 61 countries)	3	17	20	4
2015 (out of 64 countries)	4	19	18	9
2016 (out of 67 countries)	3	14	26	16
2017 (out of 65 countries)	7	29	28	13

Another trend among these countries is they all score relatively well in the Working Abroad Index. Within this index, each country scores well in the Job and Career and Job Security sub-categories. Germany and Switzerland are ranked significantly better than the United Kingdom and the United States of America in the Job Security sub-category. However, the United Kingdom and the United States of America outrank Germany and Switzerland in the Job and Career sub-category. Between 2014-2017, Germany and Switzerland are ranked in the top five every year, whereas the United Kingdom and the United States of America are ranked between 16-34. In the Job and Career sub-category, the United Kingdom and the United States of America are ranked within the top 15 each year. However, Switzerland and Germany are ranked between 11 and 37.

Table 9: Country Rankings According to the Ease of Settling In Index

Year	Germany	United Kingdom	United States of America	Switzerland
2014 (out of 61 countries)	50	27	4	53
2015 (out of 64 countries)	54	31	18	58
2016 (out of 67 countries)	57	34	21	64
2017 (out of 65 countries)	56	44	28	61

The Ease of Settling In Index is used to measure friendliness, how welcome expatriates feel in their host country, ease of finding friends, and ease and importance of speaking the language. The United States of America is ranked the best out of these four

countries. While Germany and Switzerland are ranked well in the Working Abroad and Quality of Life indexes, they both are ranked in the bottom 20 in this index throughout all four years.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The demographic data in Table 1 gave a profile for the average expatriate. The average age of respondents trended upward from 39.5 years to 43.5 years between 2014 and 2017. Since 2014, the number of female expatriates who completed the survey rose from 53% to 56% of all participants. However, these data did not provide information pertaining to the age of employed female expatriates nor did it provide information as to the number of employed female expatriates who participated in the InterNations surveys.

Table 2 shows the nationality of female expatriates from six different countries. However, since the survey was completed by the spouses of expatriate employees and by female expatriate employees, it is impossible to distinguish between the two groups.

Most of the respondents in the InterNations surveys stated that they were in a relationship. This is in concurrence with the Cartus (2007) and Global Relocation Trends (2004 and 2008) surveys which showed that approximately two-thirds of expatriates bring along a spouse, children, or both. As shown in Table 3, of those surveyed by InterNations, an average of 64% are in a committed relationship. In addition, an average of 25% of expatriates are living with dependent children. Again, there is no differentiation between employed and unemployed male and female expatriates.

The information given in Table 4 concerns the four most common destinations for expatriates, and Table 5 shows that the majority of the expatriates in the selected countries are female. However, according to the surveys conducted by InterNations, the

preferred destination countries are not those countries that offer the best experience abroad. This could be explained by the expatriates reasons for relocating. Table 6 shows the most common reasons for moving abroad. As shown in Table 7, of the four countries chosen, “I moved for love”, “I moved for my partner’s job or education”, “I was sent by my employer” or “I found a job here on my own” were the four most common reasons for moving.

“I moved for my partner’s job or education” and “I moved for love” were classified as the Traveling Spouse or the Romantic typologies, respectively. Both typologies were predominantly female. From this, it can be inferred that the majority of those who followed their spouses abroad were women as both the Traveling Spouse and the Romantic relocated in order to be with their partner or spouse. The low number of male trailing spouses or partners in these countries could indicate that the number of employed female expatriates (in a committed relationship) is low. However, InterNations does not provide data on the employment status of those who are categorized as one of these typologies.

In 2015, 60% of the Traveling Spouses stated that “giving up their previous job was difficult for them” (*Expatriate Insider*, 2015). In the 2005 ORG Worldwide study, 61% of expatriates’ spouses were employed before relocation, but only 21% could obtain employment in their host country. This holds true for both the Traveling Spouses and Romantics typologies. In 2015 and 2016, 26% and 31% of Romantics were only working part-time. In 2015, 18% of Traveling Spouses were looking for work. In 2016, 20% were looking for work and 19% described themselves as stay-at-home parents. As Harvey

stated in 1985, the partner of the expatriate may experience high levels of stress due to a “loss of self-worth and identity, particularly if he/she was previously employed, lack of contact with friends and relatives, and social or cultural ostracism in the foreign country”. In 1992, Punnett determined that due to the difficulties of obtaining a job abroad if not sent there by a parent company, many spouses stay at home. The surveys conducted by InterNations fail to provide specific information relating to employed female expatriates and their partners or spouses.

Those who cited “I was sent here by my employer” as their reason for moving are categorized as the Foreign Assignee. Women made up 40%, 32%, and 37% of this category from 2015-2017, respectively. Although there are still fewer women than men being sent on foreign assignments, this number has increased since the study in 1997 by Tung and Chen in which only 13.9% of the expatriates surveyed were female. Anyone who cited “I found a job here on my own” as their reason for moving abroad is the Career Expat. Women made up 47%, 40%, and 48% of the Career Expat from 2015-2017.

As stated before, the Working Abroad Index measures satisfaction with job and career, work-life balance, and job security. The Working Abroad Index (Table 8) provides an interesting insight into why expatriates continue to relocate to countries that, overall, are not ranked very well. In the Working Abroad Index and within the two sub-categories Job and Career and Job Security, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Switzerland are ranked higher than they are in any other index. Within the four years analyzed, the highest ranking received by one of the four countries

was Germany when it was ranked at 3rd in 2014. The lowest ranking received by one of the four countries was 29th by the United Kingdom in 2017. All the countries do well in the Job and Career sub-category, ranging from 2nd to 21st, except for Switzerland in 2016 and 2017 where it was ranked at 37th and 33rd, respectively. Expatriates could be choosing to go and stay in these countries because they offer high levels of job satisfaction. However, we do not know how many of those surveyed in these countries were able to choose which country they were sent to.

The low rating on the Ease of Settling In Index (Table 9) for all four countries has a major impact on their overall ranking. As defined by Mendenhall and Oddou (1985), others-orientation refers to the expatriate's ability to form relationships and communicate well with the host country nationals. Others-orientation plays a vital role in the experience of the expatriate, and the lack of social support from host nationals can severely impact cross-cultural adjustment. The lack of social support from host nationals can severely impact cross-cultural adjustment. After the United States of America fell from 2nd to 16th in the Feeling Welcome sub-category and 9th to 22nd in the Finding Friends sub-category from 2014 to 2015, its overall ranking dropped from 5th to 13th. The results of this survey do not provide information as to the sex of each respondent nor does it differentiate between the employed expatriate and the unemployed expatriate. Therefore, there is a need to understand more about the ease with which an employed female expatriate is able to adjust to the work and social environments when in a different country.



This study has endeavored to examine many of the factors that affect the working and cross-cultural experiences of an employed female expatriate. As evidenced in the above information, there is a need for additional study in this area. This study could be built upon by the completion of a proposed study that will delve into questions that will assist in determining the differences between the married female who is accompanied by family, the married female who is unaccompanied by family, the single female who brings her children, and the single female without children.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

There are several limitations to this study. Self-reported data was used in this study which can easily be manipulated. Many self-reported measures have no way of being verified, and can only provide “soft” data (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). For example, only the person taking the survey can answer “How satisfied are you with life abroad?”. After combining a multitude of self-reported data, *Expatriate Insider* presented its findings in the form of aggregate data. Without being able to analyze individual responses, specific statistical conclusions cannot be drawn. In certain instances, the data did not make a distinction between the employed male and female expatriates and the non-employed male and female expatriates. The data also did not differentiate between genders for the overall country rankings and the indexes.

Regarding future research, the survey below could be used to analyze the satisfaction of female employees and determine if/where employees are lacking organizational support. First, the study will examine the effects of bringing a family abroad on an expatriate assignment and whether or not these effects are likely to have a significant impact on the success of employed female expatriates. This will be accomplished by comparing the turnover intentions of married women, women with families, and single women.

In order to examine the effects of gender and marital status on turnover intentions during female expatriate assignments, a quantitative study regarding the satisfaction and turnover intention rates between married women, married women with children, single women, and single women with children on expatriate assignments should be conducted.

After receiving an adequate number of completed questionnaires, the results for married women, married women with children, and single women with children, should be compared with single women on expatriate assignments to determine if family and marital status create a significant difference in turnover intentions. In regards to limitations, this survey will also rely on self-reported data.

The survey below is modeled after the survey created by van der Heijden, et al., (2009) and the survey created by Kang in 2011. Questions 1-7 taken from the demographic questions in the Parker and McEvoy (1993) study. Question 4 was modified to be more inclusive of gender identities. The survey conducted by Kang (2011) provided the model for questions 8-40. These questions will provide insight into the personal feelings of each respondent with regards to personal adjustment, spousal adjustment, and how they perceive their children's adjustment. Questions 41-57 are modeled after Wayne et al. (1997). These questions measure respondent's intentions to quit and how they perceive their promotional opportunities and overall performance ratings.

## Survey Questions

1. Of what country were you a citizen at birth? ( )
2. How old were you on your last birthday? ( )
3. What is your marital status?
  - a. Single, never married
  - b. Married or domestic partnership
  - c. Widowed
  - d. Divorced
  - e. Separated
4. To which gender do you most identify?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Gender variant
  - d. Not listed
5. How many people live in your household? ( )
6. On average, how many hours do you spend participating in activities with your family every week?
  - a. 0 hours
  - b. 1-3 hours
  - c. 4-6 hours
  - d. 7-10 hours
  - e. 11+ hours
7. Do you have children? Yes/no
8. If you do have children, which level of school do they attend? Mark number of children (i.e., pre-school (2)).
  - a. Before pre-school ( )
  - b. Pre-school ( )
  - c. Elementary school ( )
  - d. Middle school ( )
  - e. High school ( )
  - f. College/University ( )
  - g. Graduate school ( )
  - h. Other ( )
9. If you do have children in school, what type of school do they attend?
  - a. Public school
  - b. Private school
  - c. Home school
  - d. Boarding school
  - e. International school
  - f. Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

10. What is your level of education?
- High school
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - Ph.D. degree
11. What is your position in the organization?
- Employee Assistant
  - Manager Deputy
  - Manager
  - Senior Manager
  - Executive
  - Other (describe it) \_\_\_\_\_
12. Did you have cross-cultural adjustment training before departure? Yes/No
13. Did your spouse have cross-cultural adjustment training before departure? Yes/No
14. Did your children have cross-cultural adjustment training before departure?  
Yes/No

Please indicate how you perceive your adjustment from 1 (strongly unadjusted) to 5 (strongly adjusted).

15. Living conditions  
1      2      3      4      5
16. Housing conditions  
1      2      3      4      5
17. Transportation  
1      2      3      4      5
18. Food  
1      2      3      4      5
19. Shopping  
1      2      3      4      5
20. Cost of living  
1      2      3      4      5
21. Health care facilities  
1      2      3      4      5
22. Socializing with host nationals  
1      2      3      4      5
23. Interacting with host nationals in the work environment  
1      2      3      4      5
24. Interacting with host nationals outside of work  
1      2      3      4      5
25. Performance standards and expectations  
1      2      3      4      5

If married or in a domestic partnership, please indicate how you perceive your spouse's adjustment from 1 (strongly unadjusted) to 5 (strongly adjusted).

- 26. Living conditions  
1      2      3      4      5
- 27. Housing conditions  
1      2      3      4      5
- 28. Transportation  
1      2      3      4      5
- 29. Food  
1      2      3      4      5
- 30. Shopping  
1      2      3      4      5
- 31. Cost of living  
1      2      3      4      5
- 32. Health care facilities  
1      2      3      4      5
- 33. Socializing with host nationals  
1      2      3      4      5

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- 34. My children are happy going to school.  
1      2      3      4      5
- 35. My children are happy with their social lives.  
1      2      3      4      5
- 36. I am happy with my children's education in our host country.  
1      2      3      4      5
- 37. My children are adapting well to a new school curriculum.  
1      2      3      4      5
- 38. One of my reasons for moving was my children's education.  
1      2      3      4      5
- 39. My spouse is happy with our children's education (if married or in a domestic partnership).  
1      2      3      4      5
- 40. I am satisfied with children's foreign language development.  
1      2      3      4      5

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- 41. I am actively looking for a job outside of my organization.  
1      2      3      4      5

42. As soon as I can find a better job, I'll leave my company.  
1 2 3 4 5
43. I am seriously thinking about quitting my job.  
1 2 3 4 5
44. I don't think about quitting my job.  
1 2 3 4 5
45. I think I will be working at my company five years from now.  
1 2 3 4 5
46. I expecting to advance in my company when I repatriate.  
1 2 3 4 5
47. Working abroad is a step up for me in my company.  
1 2 3 4 5
48. Working abroad is necessary for career advancement in my company.  
1 2 3 4 5
49. Success in this job leads to promotions in my company.  
1 2 3 4 5
50. I am meeting my job objectives.  
1 2 3 4 5
51. My overall job performance is satisfactory.  
1 2 3 4 5
52. I am meeting performance standards and expectations.  
1 2 3 4 5
53. I am meeting my specific job responsibilities.  
1 2 3 4 5
54. My company takes an interest in my career.  
1 2 3 4 5
55. My company considers my goals when making decisions about my career.  
1 2 3 4 5
56. My company keeps me informed about career opportunities within the company.  
1 2 3 4 5
57. I feel that my company cares about my career development.  
1 2 3 4 5

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study examined the experience of expatriates in four specified countries and how their level of satisfaction contributed to the overall ranking of these countries. Many expatriates are moving abroad with a spouse and/or children. After analyzing these data, it is clear that the cross-cultural adjustment and the job satisfaction of the expatriate is crucial for expatriate success. Empirical support for the extent to which the adjustment of the trailing spouse impacts expatriate success is less evident. In previous literature (Harvey, 1985; Caligiuri, 1997; Caligiuri, et al., 1998), the trailing spouse's adjustment was reported by the working expatriate. While the data from InterNations suggest some relationship, the proposed study follows the tradition found in the literature. Thus, there is a need for further research concerning the success of employed female expatriates in relation to cross-cultural adjustment, job satisfaction, and the adjustment of the trailing spouse.

As the world continues to move towards globalization, the need for successful expatriates is vital. As Adler stated, "Evidence suggests that the under-representation, under-utilization, and skewed distribution of women managers is neither coincidental nor random, but rather a function of systematic cultural sanctions, educational barriers, legal restrictions, and corporate practices" (Adler, 1993). Women are increasingly becoming the norm for international managerial positions, but organizations are slow to provide them with the organizational support they need. As the world continually moves towards globalization, the need for successful expatriates is vital. While there is ample research



regarding the characteristics that make a successful expatriate, there is a need for research studying the effect the home environment has on an employed female expatriate.

The practical implications of this research will help international corporations better prepare female expatriates and their families for international assignments. By assessing the impact of family relationships on the turnover intentions of female expatriates, corporations can create more effective expatriate pre- and post-departure programs.

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